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SIPDIS

STATE FOR SA/INS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: PM URGES RATIFICATION OF EMERGENCY IN SHADOW OF
ACHHAM INCIDENTS

REF(S): (A) KATHMANDU 0377 (B) KATHMANDU 0379;
(C) KATHMANDU 0333

SUMMARY

1. Parliament reconvened in the late afternoon of Feb. 18 after angry Opposition MPs had disrupted an earlier session, demanding Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba, rather than the Home Minister, take the podium to report on the Maoist attacks in Achham (Ref A) the previous day. In his address the PM also urged ratification of the state of emergency, allowing its continuation for another three months. Suggested press guidance on the attacks in Achham follows in Para 6 below. End summary.

PM ASKS PARLIAMENT TO RATIFY EMERGENCY

2. The Parliamentary session interrupted mid-day Feb. 18 after angry Opposition MPs surrounded the dais and shouted down the Home Minister (Ref B) resumed after a five-hour delay at 5:00 p.m. the same day, with Prime Minister Deuba, rather than the Home Minister, addressing the assembly. The session concluded relatively peacefully in under two hours, although Opposition MPs peppered the PM with questions about the security situation in the country, according to one member of his Cabinet.

3. The PM began by reading out the Home Minister's report on the Maoist attacks at Achham (Ref A), reporting updated casualty figures as follows: 55 Royal Nepal Army (RNA) soldiers (out of a 58-man platoon); 77 policemen; 5 civilians; and 13 insurgents. Another five policemen were killed in a separate incident in Sarlahi District the same day (Ref A). In addition, Deuba reported the Maoists stole 80 rifles, 2 shotguns, and 10 revolvers from police at the District Police station, jail, and airport in Achham.

4. The PM used the report on Achham as a lead-in to urge ratification of the state of emergency, which would allow its continuation for an additional three months (Ref C). Deuba charged that the Maoists' bad faith in breaking off the ceasefire after three rounds of negotiations had left the Government of Nepal (GON) no alternative but to seek declaration of the state of emergency. The three-month span of the emergency thus far has been insufficient to quell the insurgency, Deuba said; to do so requires more "time and patience." The Maoists' actions have made them the enemy of the Nepali people, Deuba charged; the emergency is needed to stop the bloodshed perpetrated by the Maoists. He underscored that the emergency is targeted only at Maoists, and should not adversely affect the general population. He added that the GON is giving ICRC access to Maoist prisoners and allowing the organization to scrutinize actions taken by security forces during the course of the emergency. The GON has received strong moral support from the world community, Deuba noted, including from Secretary of State Colin Powell during his Jan. 18-19 visit to Nepal and from donors at the Nepal Development Forum Feb. 4-7.

5. Deuba promised to seek all-party consensus in pursuing needed social, economic, and administrative reforms, including stronger legislation to curb corruption. Finally, he appealed to the assembled MPs to transcend "petty interests" at this time of national crisis and to unite in support of GON efforts to restore security. A vote on ratification of the emergency is scheduled to take place Feb. 22.

SUGGESTED PRESS GUIDANCE

6. The Embassy proposes the following press guidance on

the incidents at Achham:

Begin text of suggested guidance:

The Government of the United States denounces the violent attacks perpetrated by Maoist insurgents in Achham District the morning of Feb. 17. We extend our condolences to the families of the more than 130 victims of this senseless bloodshed. We reiterate our support for the right of the Government of Nepal to safeguard its citizens, as provided for under the Constitution. Once more we urge the Maoists to lay down their arms immediately and to engage in the peaceful pursuit of their aims within the democratic framework of Nepal's Constitution.

End text of suggested guidance.

MALINOWSKI